

Ask any group of people who are new to recovery *why* they want to stop using right now and you will get many different answers:

- I was arrested, and it's either this or jail.
- My wife says if I don't stop, we are finished.
- Last time I used I thought I was going to die; I know I'll die if I use again.
- They are going to take the children from us unless we stop.
- I've been using for 20 years now; it's time to change.

Which of the people quoted is most likely to be successful in recovery? It seems logical to think that people who want to stop using for themselves and not because someone else wants them to are more likely to do well in treatment. However, that may not be true. Research shows that the reasons people stop using don't predict whether they will be able to lead substance-free lives.

What does make a difference is whether they can stay substance free long enough to appreciate the benefits of a different lifestyle. When debts are not overwhelming, relationships are rewarding, work is going well, and health is good, the person in recovery *wants* to stay abstinent.



Motivation for Recovery

List some of your reasons for entering treatment (for example, medical problems, family pressure, job problems, depression).

List some of your reasons for continuing to work on your recovery today.

Do you feel that your reasons for initially stopping substance use are the same as your reasons for staying abstinent today? Why or why not?
